

Professional and Safe Conduct Policy

(TPO.STA.10)

Associated Policies

- Disciplinary Procedure (TPO.STA.22)
- Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Staff (TPO.STA.21)
- Safeguarding and Child Protection (TPO.HS.05)
- Whistleblowing (TPO.STA.19)
- Data Protection (TPO.STA.25)
- Online Safety (TPO.STU.12)
- IT Acceptable Use (GU.06)
- Bullying and Harassment (TPO.STA.43)
- Sexual Harassment (TPO.STA.42)
- Anti-Bribery and Corruption (TPO.QA.01)
- Driving and Travelling in Safety Policy and Minibus Procedure (TPO.HS.07)

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Policy Statement

Brooke Weston Trust (the Trust) and our Academies (schools) foster a culture of the highest professional standards. The aim of this policy is to establish a common understanding of the standards of behaviour expected of all adults. The policy does not attempt to provide an exhaustive list of what to do in every aspect of work but represents a broad framework within which all adults are expected to conduct themselves.

The Professional and Safe Conduct Policy complements other Trust policies which set out rules and expectations of working for the Trust. Serious breaches of the policy may require further investigation under the appropriate policy, where standards of behaviour fall below what is expected.

This policy has been drawn up in accordance with the Trust ethos, which sums up the way we want to behave as an organisation. The 5 Brooke Weston Trust core values are:

- Ambition for All
- High Expectations
- Excellent Teaching and Support
- Working Together
- Contribute to Society

This policy has also been drawn up in line with requirements and recommendations set out in [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), and must be read, understood, and applied alongside other Trust Policies.

This policy does not form part of any colleague's contract of employment, and it may be amended following consultation with colleagues and trade unions.

Scope

The Professional and Safe Conduct Policy applies to all colleagues of Brooke Weston Trust.

Although the policy does not directly apply to contractors, governors, consultants, colleagues working for third party organisations, volunteers or trustees, the Trust's continued association with these individuals and/or their organisations requires them to observe and comply with the policy. Failure to follow the expectations set out in the Professional and Safe Conduct Policy may result in these individuals being asked to no longer provide their services.

For the purposes of this policy, all the above-mentioned individuals will be referred to as 'adults.'

Data Protection and Privacy

The Trust aims to deal with matters under this policy sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of any individual involved. All adults must treat any information communicated to them in connection with a matter which is subject to this policy as confidential. Any breach of confidence may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

An adult and anyone accompanying the adults to any meeting set out in this policy, including both formal and informal meetings, must not make electronic recordings of any meetings or hearings conducted under this procedure without consent.

All discussions and sensitive information collated during any process following a breach of the Professional and Safe Conduct Policy will be treated confidentially by all parties concerned. This data will be collected, used and stored in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. Please refer to our privacy notices for more detail on how data will be processed – [Brooke Weston Trust - Data Protection Information](#).

Roles and Responsibilities

The CEO has responsibility for ensuring all appropriate policies, systems and training are in place.

The Executive Team, via the Strategic Delivery Group is responsible for the review and implementation of this policy.

In each Academy, the Principal is accountable for ensuring compliance with this policy. In central teams, the Heads of Profession and Executive team members are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.

The Head of People is responsible for reviewing and updating this policy, developing associated guidelines, making recommendations for improvement, and providing ongoing training and support for all colleagues.

All managers have a specific responsibility to operate within the boundaries of this policy, ensure that all adults understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and to take action when behaviour falls below its requirements. This policy should form part of every new colleague's induction programme.

Colleague and Adult Expectations Summary

In summary, all adults are expected to work within the scope of their contract of employment, which is built on trust. That trust is damaged if an adult fails to:

- Attend work in a condition where they can carry out their duties in a safe, effective and responsible way.
- Act honestly and be truthful in their dealings with members of the Brooke Weston Trust community.
- Act with and treat others with professionalism, dignity and respect.
- Work in accordance with the terms and conditions of their contract of employment and job description.
- Carry out the reasonable instructions of their supervisors, managers, Senior Leaders, Principals and Executive Leadership Teams.
- Understand and abide with the Trust values, including the [Brooke Weston Trust Way](#).
- Understand and abide by the Trust policies and procedures.

Trust would also be damaged should an adult:

- Seek to deceive Brooke Weston Trust and our Academies by withholding information, giving false information, damaging, or altering records or documents without authorisation.
- Misrepresented Brooke Weston Trust in their dealings with others or make any statement on behalf of the Trust which they are not authorised to do.

In addition to this Professional and Safe Conduct, all Teachers have a statutory obligation to adhere to the most recent "Teachers' Standards" and in relation to this policy, [Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct](#).

Principals should refer to the [Headteachers' Standards](#) for further non-statutory expectations of professional conduct.

['Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in Education Settings'](#) issued by the Safer Recruitment Consortium sets out key expectations for adult interactions with children and young people – the full guidance is available above.

Adults are all responsible for creating a positive working environment and behaving in a manner which ensures and promotes acceptable conduct. Adults must strive toward and promote harmonious and professional relationships with all colleagues. It is understood that, at times, differences of opinions can occur and at such times it is expected that adults will attempt to resolve matters informally and professionally in the first instance unless they feel unable to do so in which case, they should refer the matter to their line manager.

All adults have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of students. An individual's behaviour, either in or out of the workplace should not compromise their position within the Trust or bring the Trust into disrepute.

The Trust expects all colleagues to lead by example and to:

- Treat other colleagues, students, parents, volunteers, contractors, visitors and members of the public with dignity and respect and in line with the Brooke Weston Trust values.
- Be consciously aware that they are role models to students and therefore should lead by example.
- Refrain from using inappropriate, discriminatory or offensive language at all times.
- Ensure the welfare and safety of students and not engage in any activity that would compromise this fundamental obligation.

The expectations set out in this policy are relevant at all times when an individual is representing the organisation. This includes educational visits and school trips, where the less formal approach adopted in extra-curricular activities generally can be open to misinterpretation. Although more informal relationships in such circumstances tend to be usual, the standard of behaviour expected of adults will be no different from the behaviour expected within the Academy.

Colleagues must not engage in conduct outside work which could damage the reputation and standing of their Academy, the Trust or the colleagues own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

Behaviour or activities that are not in line with the required standards outlined in this policy or other Trust policies may be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy (TPO.STA.22).

Colleagues should not make contact with students outside of official working hours or Academy/Trust sanctioned extra-curricular activities unless in exceptional circumstances and only via Trust communication equipment (e.g. a company mobile phone or work email account). Colleagues should never make contact with students via a private/personal phone, email account, and/or social media accounts.

The Professional and Safe Conduct Policy is not an exhaustive list of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for adults. However, it does highlight behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable in relation to the following categories:

- Confidentiality
- Conflict of Interest
- Dress Code
- Use of Electronic Devices (including mobile phones and photography)
- Use of the Internet (including email and social media)
- Smoking, Vaping, Drug and Alcohol Use
- Personal relationships at work
- Professional relationships with colleagues
- Relationships Towards Students
- Physical Contacts and Personal Privacy
- Transporting Students
- Sharing Concerns and Reporting Incidents

Confidentiality

Confidential information can take various forms and be held and transmitted in various ways e.g. manual records (files, reports and notes), verbal discussions and electronic records. As a rule, all information received while working with the Trust, should be regarded as sensitive and confidential and must not be disclosed or divulged within or outside the Trust other than in accordance with the requirement of the role and/or where specific permission has been provided. Please contact Hannah Turner, hannah.turner@brookewestontrust.org in the first instance with any concerns or questions about information disclosure, in accordance with the Data Protection Policy (TPO.STA.25).

NOTE: All adults must be aware that they are obliged to disclose information relating to child protection issues and should make it clear to the individual either that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed and/or decline to receive the information and direct them to a more appropriate person e.g. the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). If an individual makes a disclosure regarding abuse or neglect, the adult must follow the Trust and individual Academy's procedures and the guidance as set out in [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#). Please refer to the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (TPO.HS.05).

Confidential information must be held securely and must not be held off the Academy/Trust site other than on security protected Trust equipment. The information must only be stored for the length of time necessary to discharge the task for which it is required.

If an adult is unsure about the storage of or sharing of information, they must seek guidance from a member of the Senior Leadership Team or HR.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is any situation in which a colleague has a business or personal interest or loyalty that could prevent them from making a decision that is only in the best interests of the Academy/Trust. Conflicts of interest can be actual, potential and perceived. They may be financial, professional, personal or indirect.

It's not possible to provide an exhaustive list of what constitutes a conflict of interest, but some examples include where:

- A colleague is related to a child within the Academy/Trust
- A colleague has a connection or friendship with families within the Academy/Trust
- A colleague currently has or has had a sexual or intimate personal relationship with another colleague which could affect a professional working relationship

- A colleague undertakes paid or voluntary work outside of their position at the Academy/Trust that involves students from the Academy/Trust
- A colleague is involved in invigilating examinations or assessing/submitting coursework for a student who is known to them outside of the Academy/Trust.

All colleagues should declare:

- Any friendship or family relationship where there is a potential conflict of interest, for example a relationship between colleagues, involvement in recruitment involving friends or family members
- Any current charity and/or business interest in an organisation that could stand to gain from their position as a member of the Academy/Trust
- Any relevant financial interest or gain in any contract the Academy/Trust holds or proposes to enter into
- Charity and/or business interests of their spouses, partners, close relatives or friends, where there is a possibility that the Academy/Trust will have dealings with that person
- Governance and Trustee roles in other educational institutions
- And any other volunteering positions that could cause a conflict of interest.

Colleagues who are looking to take on other employment on a part-time basis whilst still working for the Trust should inform the Principal/line manager of that fact and of the type of work they wish to take on. This is required to ensure that the required tax and national insurance deductions are made and/or that working hours limits are not breached in accordance with the Working Time Regulations 1998.

Dress Code

All adults are required to look smart and professional, to be neat and tidy in appearance and wear clothing that is safe and appropriate to the role. Clothing must be modest and not revealing or see through.

Where the Academy/Trust provides an item or items of uniform to enable adults to carry out their duties, this must always be worn whilst on duty. Where there is a specific dress code required for a specific role, then additional local arrangements may apply and will be determined by the line manager.

Shoes, sandals or boots can be worn but not trainers, unless teaching PE or involved in a sporting activity. All adults are advised to wear sensible, supportive footwear for Health and Safety reasons. Flip flops/Crocs should not be worn at any time.

Jewellery is generally acceptable if it does not present a health and safety hazard. Jewellery/piercings should also be removed where they are a risk to health and safety e.g. during PE or while working in the Academy's restaurants.

While hair is generally not an issue, there are potential health and safety issues, e.g. when handling food or operating machinery, hair must be tied back/covered. Clothing, accessories or tattoos which promote political or otherwise contentious slogans including offensive language, logos and badges, will not be accepted and where appropriate the Principal/line manager, may ask the adult to cover up or to return home to change. In these circumstances, the adult may not be paid for the duration of their absence.

Identity badges must be worn and visible at all times on any Academy or Trust premises.

Use of Electronic Devices (including mobile phones and photography)

The Trust recognises that electronic devices and media are important tools and resources in an educational context and can save time and expense. Those using Trust equipment and networks are expected to do so responsibly and to comply with all applicable laws, policies and procedures, and with normal standards of professional and personal courtesy and conduct.

Colleagues must use Trust-issued mobile phones when contacting parents or students. Under no circumstances should colleagues be providing their personal phone numbers to parents or students. Colleagues must use phones provided by the Academy to conduct all work-related business.

Colleagues will not take pictures or recordings of students on their personal phones or cameras. Colleagues will only take pictures or recordings of students and colleagues when authorised to do so.

Individual Academy's will have their own mobile phone guidance to be followed whilst on their sites, and adults should familiarise themselves with this.

Adults will limit personal mobile phone use to times when students are not present. Adults' personal phones will remain in their bags, cupboards, or out of site during contact time with students. Excessive use of personal phones during working hours is not acceptable and may result in formal conversations with your line manager.

All adults should read and sign the Trust Acceptable Use Policy (GU.06) on an annual basis.

Use of the Internet (including email and social media)

All adults must be aware that no email, or Teams message, sent using their employee account is private. It is therefore very important to always use professional language as any communications could and may be made public at any time. The Trust Acceptable Use Policy (GU.06) sets out further guidance.

Under no circumstances should adults access inappropriate images in their Academy or offices. Deliberately accessing pornography or inappropriate images will be treated as gross misconduct and may be a criminal offence. Accessing indecent images of children on the Internet and making, storing or disseminating such material is illegal and is likely to lead to criminal prosecution and may result in an individual being barred from working with children and young people.

As with all personal internet use, adults should not access social media sites for personal reasons during working time.

Colleagues are personally responsible for what they communicate on social media and the internet and must bear in mind that what is published may fall into the public domain. Colleagues must ensure that their online profiles are consistent with the professional image expected and must not post material which damages the reputation of the Trust, make potentially defamatory remarks towards the Academy, the Trust or its community, or post anything which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and young people. Colleagues must not represent their own views/opinions as being those of the Academy or the Trust, and they should not use any offensive or discriminatory language.

It is recommended that adults ensure that all possible privacy settings are activated to prevent students from making contact on personal profiles and to prevent students from accessing photo albums or other personal information which may appear on social networking sites.

Colleagues must not give their personal details, such as address, telephone number, personal email address or social networking details to students. If a student attempts to locate an adult's personal contact details and/or attempts to contact or correspond with them, the colleague should not respond and must report the matter to their line manager/DSL or DDSL.

Colleagues are not permitted to view, follow or contact current/ex-students up to the age of 18. Communication with ex-students who are over 18 is left to the colleagues' discretion however, colleagues need to be mindful that their relationship with students, including ex-students is formed on a "pupil/teacher" basis (note: definition of teacher in this statement includes all colleagues) and therefore communication between a colleague and student/ex-student should be entered into with due consideration of this definition. Please be conscious of the fact that ex-students may be in contact with current students. Students should not be discussed on personal social media accounts and information must not be posted that would disclose the identity of the students, including photographs or videos.

The Trust requests that complaints are made in line with the Complaints Policy (TPO.QA.02) or the Grievance Procedure (TPO.STA.23) dependant on the nature of the complaint, which is a constructive approach to address any concerns, rather than negative opinions or complaints being aired on social media platforms. No conversation about any matter of complaint or dispute should be shared by colleagues via any social media channel. They should instead refer the issue to the relevant senior leader.

If a dispute with a third party or parent is initiated or perpetuated by means of social media this must be reported to the Principal/line manager as soon as possible. No response to any post should be made until directed to do so.

Smoking, Vaping, Drug and Alcohol Use

The Trust and its Academies will not tolerate the presence or misuse of illegal drugs, drugs with no accepted medicinal purpose, alcohol or other prohibited substances on its sites, on off-site school trips or events in which students are being supervised.

The Trust adopts a no-smoking/vaping policy at all sites for adults and students alike. All adults who wish to smoke/vape may do so in their own time during designated unpaid breaks and offsite. Adults are not permitted to smoke/vape whilst carrying out their duties and responsibilities. Any smoking or vaping products must be stored securely and safely away from students.

Adults must not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol during working hours and must not support or influence others to use alcohol or drugs. It is illegal for any person to be found in possession or to supply illegal drugs. Should illegal drugs or alcohol be found in the possession of an Adult, an investigation under the Disciplinary Policy may be carried out as well as notifying the police of any illegal activity.

Adults must not bring alcohol onto any Trust site without the express and prior written consent of the Principal or member of the Executive Team. Any alcohol brought onto site with consent from the Principal must be stored securely and safely away from students. Failure to get permission may result in an investigation under the Disciplinary Policy.

In taking temporary possession and disposing of suspected illegal drugs the Academy will endeavour to:

- Ensure that a second adult witness is present throughout
- Seal the sample in a plastic bag and include details of the date and time of the seizure/find and witness present

- Store it in a secure location, such as a safe or other lockable container with access limited to senior management
- Normally notify the police without delay, who will collect it and then store or dispose of it in line with locally agreed protocols
- Record full details of the incident, including the police incident reference number
- Identify any safeguarding concerns and develop a support and disciplinary response.

Colleagues must advise their line manager immediately should they be prescribed medication or plan to take over the counter medicines that may cause side effects which may affect their work performance or the health and safety of themselves or others for example, drowsiness, dizziness or tiredness etc. This will enable the line manager to carry out a risk assessment of the colleague's role and assess their suitability to continue work. All medication should be stored securely, away from students.

Colleagues who experience side-effects as a result of taking prescribed or over the counter medicines that impair their ability to perform their duties safely and satisfactorily must notify their line manager immediately.

The Trust endeavours to ensure that advice and help are made available to any colleague who feels they have a problem with alcohol or drug misuse. In the first instance, individuals will be encouraged to seek help from their GP. Under these circumstances and with the colleague's consent, a referral may be made to the Occupational Health service.

Colleagues who seek the assistance of the Trust in finding treatment for a drugs or alcohol dependency will be treated with respect and in the strictest of confidence. Colleagues who seek assistance or who have a known dependency are still subject to the same rules as set out in this Policy.

Useful Links

Association:	Telephone:	Website:
Alcoholics Anonymous (Alcohol Services)	0800 9177 650	www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk
FRANK (Friendly, Confidential Drugs Advice)	0300 123 6600	www.talktofrank.com
Addiction Helper (Alcohol and Drug Addiction)	0800 024 1476	www.addictionhelper.com
NHS (National Health Service)	111	www.nhs.uk

Personal Relationships at Work

The Trust recognises colleagues have a right to a private life and it understands that close personal relationships may already exist or develop between other colleagues or adults associated with the Trust/Academy. Whilst the Trust does not discourage relationships between adults, it is also important to ensure that professional boundaries are maintained to prevent conflicts of interest, and to support an inclusive working and learning environment.

A personal relationship can be defined as:

- A romantic or sexual relationships (past or present)
- A close friendship
- A family relationship (including but not limited to, parents, children or siblings)
- Any other relationship that could influence workplace behaviour or decision-making.

Colleagues Working with Their Own Children/Close Relation

The Trust recognises the needs of working parents and supports colleagues who choose to enrol their children in our setting. However, to maintain professional standards, we require specific boundaries to be observed and require our colleagues to remain neutral and treat all students with the same regard.

Colleagues must maintain a professional separation during working hours. Contact during the day with their own children or those of a close relative/friend should be minimal and purposeful, with prior authorisation from their line manager. Colleagues are expected to fulfil their responsibilities and adhere to their full job description during working hours.

Under no circumstances should a colleague access confidential records of their own children or those of a close relative/friend or ask another colleague to do this on their behalf. Should a colleague have a concern or wish to discuss a matter regarding their own child, this should be raised in the same manner as expected of a parent associated with the Academy/Trust.

It is generally not appropriate for colleagues to work with their own children or those of a close relative/friend, however, we recognise that this may not always be possible.

Where colleagues work in the same area as their child or close relation, there is an agreed set of guidelines between the Academy and colleague setting out the expectations of working with their child/close relation. These include a clear statement that during their time at work the child is in the care of the Academy and it is the Academy that retains responsibility for the child and their care.

If a colleague's child becomes unwell, the colleague will be notified in line with the Academy's procedures for notifying parents. Colleagues must notify their line manager and wait for appropriate cover to be arranged before leaving.

If any safeguarding concern arises regarding a colleague's child, normal safeguarding procedures must be followed. Where the child's parent is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), concerns should be reported to the Deputy DSL (DDSL) or Principal to avoid any potential conflict of interest.

Colleagues Responsibilities

To ensure potential conflicts of interest are avoided, colleagues are required to inform their line manager or Principal of any relationship which may affect their work or compromise the Academy/Trust in any way. Any such information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Professionalism must always be maintained both at the workplace and any work-related events which are attended by colleagues who have a personal relationship.

Colleagues should ensure that any changes to their circumstances are also declared to their line manager in a timely manner.

Line Managers' Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the line manager to ensure that a colleague's relationship is not the cause of a conflict of interest. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times if the colleague does not wish their relationship to be disclosed. Specifically, the manager should:

- Consider alternative roles where applicable in consultation with the People Team
- Take action where complaints are received and follow the appropriate Trust policies and procedures
- Report any suspicious or fraudulent activity to the Principal
- Take advice from the People Team in the event of a personal relationship breakdown to assess the risk to students, families and colleagues, especially any risk of sexual harassment
- Maintain an appropriate confidential record of personal relationships.

Where the relationship exists between a colleague and their line manager, it is the responsibility of both to inform a more senior manager or Principal.

A senior manager/Principal will be responsible for the conduct of operational matters when a personal relationship exists between a line manager and a person for whom the line manager has or may have responsibility. These operational matters are, for example:

- Recruitment processes (including screening, interviewing and offering candidates)
- Dealing with any disciplinary or performance concerns, whether routine or caused by specific incidents
- Signing off any hours worked above normal working hours
- Confirming any payment arrangements to be made
- Conducting PDD meetings
- Involvement in reorganisation of the area of the business in which the colleague works.

Consistency of treatment is paramount and no preferential or unfavourable treatment of those in a relationship or who have in the past been in a relationship or any other person is permitted as a result of the relationship.

The Trust/Academy will attempt to deal with any conflicts of interest caused by personal relationships in the workplace in a sensitive manner and an informal method will always be used in the first instance. However, where this does not bring about a satisfactory resolution, the matter may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

Professional Relationships with Colleagues

The Trust expects all colleagues to maintain the highest standards of professionalism when working with other colleagues or adults associated with the Academy/Trust. Colleagues should foster a collaborative and respectful relationship with one another, communicate constructively, and resolve conflicts appropriately to uphold a positive working atmosphere.

In an educational environment, where adults serve as role models for students, every interaction should reflect mutual respect, integrity, and a commitment to creating a supportive learning culture.

Any behaviour that compromises professional boundaries or undermines the Trust's ethos and values may be subject to formal disciplinary procedures.

Relationships towards Students and Ex-Students

Colleagues must maintain an up-to-date knowledge and understanding of, implement, and comply with, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (TPO.HS.05) and procedures, and act as a positive role model to students.

Adults must observe boundaries with students that are appropriate to their professional position. They must act in a fair and transparent way that would not lead anyone to reasonably assume they are not doing so.

Adults must maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted by others. This is relevant on and offline. If an adult is concerned at any point that an interaction between themselves and a student may have been misinterpreted, they must report this to the Principal immediately.

Adults should avoid spending time on a one-on-one basis with students, although it is recognised that there may be occasions when one-on-one meetings may be required. Where this is the case, adults will ensure:

- This takes place in a location that others can access
- Others can see into the room
- A colleague or line manager knows this is taking place.

Colleagues must not:

- Use their position to gain access to information for their own advance and/or a student or family's detriment
- Use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine students
- Use their status and standing to form or promote a relationship with a student, which is of a personal or sexual nature
- Attempt to initiate a relationship which is of a sexual nature, with an ex-student under the age of 21.

Colleagues need to be mindful that their relationship with students, including ex-students is formed on a "pupil/teacher" basis (note: definition of teacher in this statement includes all colleagues) and therefore any type of relationships between a colleague and ex-student should be entered into with due consideration of this definition.

Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit or otherwise of a sensitive nature. When using teaching materials of a particular sensitive nature, colleagues should be aware of the danger and that their selection could be misinterpreted and may be criticised after the event. Care should be taken to ensure that any potential areas of risk or sensitivity are highlighted in advance.

The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about a subject matter of a sexually explicit nature or otherwise sensitive issue. Responding to students' questions can require careful judgement and colleagues should exercise their professional judgement in responding to such questions.

Sexual Contact with Young People and Abuse of Trust

Any sexual behaviour by an adult with or towards a young person is both inappropriate and illegal. Children and young people are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether there is consent or not. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 specifically establishes an offence of a person over 18 engaging in sexual activity with a child under 18, where the person over 18 is in a position of trust over the child. All adults within education are in a position of trust.

Adults must not have sexual relationships with students or have any form of communication with a child, which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, texts, electronic mail, phone calls, social networking contact or physical contact. The adult should not make sexual remarks to, or about, a child or discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of students. Adults should take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculations. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought.

Sexual abuse is defined as “forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities not necessarily involving a high level of violence whether or not the child is aware of what is happening” Sexual behaviour includes non-contact activities, such as involving children looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. (Keeping Children Safe in Education).

There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as ‘grooming’ for which the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child or young person and manipulate the relationship so that sexual abuse can take place. Adults should be aware that conferring special attention without good reason or favouring a student has the potential to be construed as grooming which is a criminal offence.

A relationship between an adult and a child or young person cannot be a relationship between equals. There is the potential for exploitation and harm, and all adults have the responsibility to ensure that the unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

Infatuations or Crushes

Adults must recognise that a student may be strongly attracted to an adult and develop an infatuation. Any adult who becomes aware that such an infatuation may be developing must report this immediately to the Principal and DSL/DDSL in a sensitive and appropriate way, to maintain dignity and safety for all concerned.

The situation must be taken seriously, and the adult must be careful not to give any encouragement.

Communication with Students

Adults should be aware of and comply with the Trust’s Online Safety Policy (TPO.STU.12).

Colleagues should avoid contact or communication with students outside of agreed working hours, unless as part of pre-arranged activities by the Academy, or in exceptional circumstances with prior approval of the Principal and parent and/or carer. Personal contact details should not be exchanged between colleagues and students. This includes contact mobile phone numbers and social media.

All adults are expected to maintain a professional and respectful tone in all interactions with students. Under no circumstances should an adult raise their voice, shout at, or use aggressive language toward a student. An adult should also not use sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards students. Such behaviour is considered inappropriate and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism

While the Trust is aware many students and their parents may wish to give gifts to colleagues, for example, at the end of the school year, gifts from colleagues to students are generally not acceptable.

All adults should be aware of the Trust’s Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy (TPO.QA.01) which covers both giving and receiving of gifts. Adults should ensure that all gifts received or given in situations that may be misconstrued are declared.

Gifts should only be given to a student as part of an agreed reward system with fair and transparent methods and criteria for selecting a student for an award.

Physical Contacts and Personal Privacy

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate for an adult to have physical contact with students, but it is crucial that they do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. Where physical contact is made with students it should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, ethnicity and background.

Adults must:

- Be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the student, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described
- Never touch a student in a way which may be considered indecent
- Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact could be open to scrutiny
- Consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a student might misinterpret any such contact, perhaps involving another adult, or a less vulnerable student in a demonstration
- Always explain to a student why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take, unless their safety is at immediate risk
- Share information in accordance with safeguarding procedures

Physical contact must never be secretive or casual or for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority. If an adult believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances must be reported to the Principal or Vice Principals immediately in line with the Low Level Concerns process.

There may be occasions when a distressed student needs comfort and re-assurance. This may include age-appropriate physical contact. Adults should always remain self-aware in order that their contact is not viewed as threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation. Where an adult is concerned about the need to provide this sort of care and re-assurance they should seek advice from their line manager or Principal.

Some adults, such as PE colleagues and those who provide music tuition, may have to initiate physical contact to demonstrate the use of equipment or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the student's agreement. Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum amount of time and take place in an open environment.

Physical contact which occurs regularly with a student is likely to raise questions unless the justification is part of a formally agreed plan, e.g. in relation to students with SEND or physical disabilities. Where feasible, adults should seek the student's agreement and the physical contact should be for the minimum amount of time and take place in an open environment.

Students are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower, however, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard students, satisfy health and safety considerations and ensure that bullying does not occur. Adults must:

- Avoid any physical contact when students are in a state of undress
- Always consider the supervision needs of students, and only remain in the room where the students' needs or age require this
- Not change in the same place as students or shower with students

Colleagues who have to administer First Aid should ensure whenever possible that other students or another adult are present if they are in any doubt as to whether necessary physical contact could be misconstrued. Wherever possible, colleagues that have to help students with physical disabilities should be accompanied by another adult.

Transporting Students

In certain circumstances an adult may agree to transport students. Wherever possible transport arrangements should be made in advance and practicable transport should be provided other than private vehicles. If the use of a private vehicle is necessary, at least one additional adult should accompany the driver as an escort. It is inappropriate for colleagues to offer lifts to a student, unless the need has been agreed with their line manager or Principal and, if this falls outside their normal working duties, has been agreed with parents and/ or carers.

Colleagues should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the driver of the vehicle meet all legal and insurance requirements and health and safety considerations set out in the Driving and Travelling in Safety Policy and Minibus Procedure (TPO.HS.07).

There may be occasions where a student requires transport in an emergency situation or where not to give a lift may place a student at risk. Such circumstances must always be recorded and reported to their line manager or Principal, and parents and/or carers.

Sharing Concerns and Reporting Incidents

All adults must be vigilant and have a duty to share and report concerns or incidents. Adults have a number of mechanisms for sharing concerns, depending on the nature of the incident.

Adults are required to notify the Academy immediately of any allegations of misconduct, especially those that are of a safeguarding nature, made against them (or implicating them), by a child or adult in relation to any outside work or interest (whether paid or unpaid) and, of any arrest or criminal charge whether child-related or not, as set out in the Disclosure and Barring Service Checks Policy (TPO.STA.03).

In the first instance, where a person has reason to suspect that an adult may have behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child, or behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, they should immediately inform the Principal. Further guidance on dealing with allegations against adults can be found in the policy (TPO.STA.21).

Low Level Concerns are concerns which do not meet the threshold set out in the above policy, can be reported by following the guidance in the Low Level Concerns Policy (TPO.HS.13). These may be behaviours that are inconsistent with this policy, including inappropriate conduct outside of work.

Whistleblowing is the mechanism for the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work which are in the public interest. The procedures for doing so are outlined in the Trust's policy on Whistleblowing (TPO.STA.19).

Document Control

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Approved by:	SDG	Status:	Non-statutory

Summary of Changes V6:

- Conflict of Interest section added in line with the Trust's Annual Declaration process.
- Dress Code section updated in line with Health & Safety guidelines.
- Smoking, Vaping, Drug and Alcohol Use section updated in line with Health & Safety guidelines and to include support for colleagues.
- Personal and Professional relationships sections added.
- Relationships towards Students section updated to also include communication with students and gifts, rewards and favouritism.